(c) the details of the measures taken therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Sale of any prohibited drug is monitored by State Drug Control Authorities and they have been advised to keep a constant check on such sales.

Financial Assistance to Chittaranjan Cancer Hospital, Kolkata

1131. SHRI JIBON ROY:
SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have stopped providing financial assistace to Chittaranjan Cancer Hospital, Kolkata;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if not, by when the next instalment of fund from National Illness Assistance Fund is likely to be released?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) During the year 2002-2003 an amount of Rs. 8.00 lakhs has been released to the Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute, Kolkata from the National Illness Assistance Fund. Apart from this an amount of Rs. 309.00 lakhs for meeting Non-Plan expenditure and Rs. 600.00 lakhs for meeting Plan expenditure have also been released to the Institute during 2002-03.

Aids Vaccine

1132. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ICMR is developing AIDS vaccine;

(b) if so, the details of research;

(c) whether it is a fact that Phase-II trials are going to be conducted next year in the National AIDS Research Institute; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in collaboration with the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) and the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) is working with an institute based in Boston. Therion Biologics, to develop a Modified Vaccinia Ankara (MVA) vector based Vaccine. This MVA vaccine is perceived as being most appropriate for use in India, since it targets the HIV sub type C strain, most predominant in India. The National AIDS Research Institute (NARI), Pune, has characterized and sequenced multiple HIV genes to broden the immune response within the recipient. The strategy, is to prevent the progression of infection to the disease stage.

An ICMR scientist from the National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED), Kolkata, played a key role in developing the vaccine candidate at the institute in Boston. The vaccine candidate is currently undergoing laboratory tests that are mandatory before commencing the testing on the human body.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Phase-I trials are proposed to be conducted at NARI, Pune after satisfactory completion of toxicity and immunogenicity trials in animals and after all appropriate clearances are obtained from the mandatory regulatory bodies, and the candidate vaccine is ready for the trials.

Currently, guidelines and protocols are being developed by NARI, to conduct the Phase-I trials. Plans to upgrade laboratory and clinical infrastructure at NARI are also being discussed.

Focal Points for Plague Bacteria

1133. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the medical experts have identified four areas in the country which are focal points for plague bacteria;